

Eight honored at Macalester Reunion

St. Paul, Minn. – What do a writer, the former president of the National Council of Black American Affairs, a Princeton Economics and Public Affairs professor, a math teacher/athletic director/assistant principal and coach, a Macalester Geography professor, a practicing artist and professor, the owner of Wet Paint Artists' Materials and Framing and the executive director of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women have in common? They are all Macalester alumni who were honored in June during reunion weekend.

"The alumni who received these awards are nothing short of remarkable," said Director of Alumni Relations Gabrielle Lawrence. "They have all found their calling, the seeds of which were planted at Macalester."



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Here are the eight awardees:

Paula Hirschhoff '66, Washington, D.C., Charles J. Turck Global Citizen Award *which honors the legacy of Charles J. Turck, president of Macalester College from 1939 to 1958. Lawyer, educator, social activist, internationalist, and churchman, President Turck championed internationalism throughout his tenure. This award recognizes an alumnus who has advanced the internationalist spirit and lived up to the exhortation, "to be a worthy son or daughter of Macalester, you must listen to your hopes and not your fears."*

Paula Hirschhoff came to Macalester in 1962 determined to expand her world, and she has succeeded at that beyond her wildest dreams. While at Macalester, she took part in both an exchange program with a historically black college and in the SWAP (Student Work Abroad Project) program that took her to Paris for the summer. "Those opportunities were life changing and crucial in shaping who I became," says Hirschhoff. But her college years were only the beginning, sowing the seeds of her interest in international service and the peoples of Africa, which became dominant themes in her life. Three years after graduating from Macalester, she was serving in the Peace Corps in Kenya as headmistress and teacher for a girls' boarding school. "I was so fortunate to have been there at a time when Africa was emerging and so accessible," she says. Those two years plus subsequent travels throughout the continent provided her with lessons and friendships that helped her compose a life centered on Africa. In later years, Hirschhoff has worked as an editor for *Africa Report* magazine, as a writer and editor for USAID (United States Agency for International Development) projects, and as a consultant for the Africa Resources Trust. She has returned to Africa many times, including another two-year stint with the Peace Corps, this time in Senegal. Hirschhoff went back to school at midlife, earning a master's degree in cultural anthropology with a focus on Africa. She has been a docent at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art since 1989, immersed in African art and culture and guiding visitors through the exhibitions. Hirschhoff's other volunteer activities also center around her beloved Africa, including work with the Friends of Kenya, the Global Fund for Women, and the Cape Verde Jewish Heritage Trust. Then there's the small fund she and her husband set up to give grants to Peace Corps projects in the area of Senegal where they once worked, plus ongoing support for students in Kenya and Senegal. "Paula Hirschhoff is a true citizen of the world," wrote her Macalester classmate friend Darlene Kunze. Hirschhoff herself put it this way, "I never wanted an easy life. I wanted challenges. Perhaps that's why I identify with the challenges in Africa; and I admire the beauty, courage and wisdom of Africans in facing them."

James Bennett '69, Seattle, Wash., *Catharine Lealtad Service to Society Award* is given to an alumnus or alumna of color who has used his or her education to distinguish themselves in service to community.

Young James Bennett was a sought-after high school valedictorian, basketball player and Merit Scholar in his all-black high school in Texas City, Texas. Encouraged by basketball coach Doug Bolstorff, he took the road less traveled to Macalester. As one of only six African American students in his first-year class, he felt “less like a pioneer than a survivor.” Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, Bennett committed his career to social justice and providing educational opportunities to students who didn’t fit the traditional profile of the time. Bennett was part of a group of students who founded the Black Liberation Affairs Committee (BLAC). He was active in the collaboration that launched the Expanded Educational Opportunities (EEO) program, which he joined as a staff member following graduation. An English and education major, Bennett also taught courses on black literature in the English Department. He went on to earn a master’s in interdisciplinary studies at Mankato State University and a PhD in higher education administration at the University of Washington. In 1978 his career took him to Bellevue College in Washington, where he served in various capacities, including as dean of instruction (1990–2006) and vice president–equity and pluralism (2006–2011). He served on the board and as president of the National Council of Black American Affairs, which bestowed on him their national Leadership Award. Bennett’s influence is reflected in the fact that, 45 years after he graduated from Macalester, four different alumni nominated him for this award. When James Bennett retired in 2011, the tributes that meant the most to him were those of the students, whose success was always his unwavering goal.

Alex Mas '99, Princeton, N.J., *Young Alumni Award* recognizes alumni who have graduated in the past 15 years. This award pays tribute to those who are making an effective contribution to the community in which they live, or moving forward rapidly in their career, and living the kind of unselfish, caring life for which their Macalester education prepared them.

When the global recession of 2009 gripped the country, the Obama administration called on one of the country’s most highly regarded economists, Alex Mas. Mas served as chief economist for the U.S. Department of Labor 2009–2010, and as associate director for economic policy and chief economist for the Office of Management and Budget in the Executive Office of the President, 2010–2011. He then returned to Princeton where he is professor of economics and public affairs in the university’s Department of Economics and Woodrow Wilson School. At the OMB he dealt with issues ranging from labor to energy, from benefits to education. He credits his Macalester economics and mathematics classes for the framework enabling him to address those many varied concerns. He is grateful specifically for the mentorship of economics professor Gary Krueger, and mathematics professors Karen Saxe and Tom Halverson. Halverson inspired Mas by bringing him for a week to Princeton’s Institute for Advanced Study, Einstein’s long-time academic home, where he encountered the world’s most famous mathematicians. In addition to teaching many of the future’s economists, Mas is a fellow or associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research, the IZA (Institute for the Study of Labor), and The Brookings Institution. He is known for using data and the scientific approach to inform policy on such critical issues as poverty, unemployment, and equal opportunity. Mas also edits the *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*. Often honored for his contributions, in one year alone Mas was named a Sloan Research Fellow and received the IZA Young Labor Economics Award and Princeton’s Albert Rees Prize.

Dean Verdoes '64, Mendota Heights, Minn., *Alumni Service Award* recognizes an alumnus whose significant service and consistent loyalty to the college has set an outstanding example of volunteerism.

There’s no question that the legacy of Dean Verdoes includes a lifetime commitment to athletics, beginning with his days as a standout high school basketball player at Edgerton High School in rural Minnesota. He

continued playing basketball at Macalester, and after he graduated, he began a 35-year career in high school athletics and public education, 30 years of which were at Henry Sibley High School in Mendota Heights, Minnesota. In addition to Dean's roles as math teacher, athletic director, and assistant principal during his career, his coaching experience included many soccer, basketball, and golf teams. Dean retired in 2000, but retirement did not end his work with the school district. He has served as a volunteer on the ISD 197 District Educational Foundation for many years. In recognition of his leadership, achievement, and service, Dean was inducted into the Minnesota State High School League's Hall of Fame in 2011. Fortunately for the Macalester community, Dean's passion for sports includes Mac athletics. He has attended countless athletic events, often recruiting fellow alumni to join him in the bleachers. He's also an active member of the M Club Board of Directors and an instrumental part of the organization. His duties include chairing the Hall of Fame Committee, setting up the M Club budget, and often being the chief Scot Dog griller at various fall, winter, and spring sports days. Dean also co-chaired the Class of 1964's 50th Reunion program committee. He helped recruit a successful committee, and his leadership helped shape an innovative and inclusive Reunion with exceptional attendance. "Dean is always one to share how much he loves Macalester," said Daymond Dean '91, one of Dean's several nominators for the Alumni Service Award. "He'll do whatever he can to contribute to events that bring our community together in celebration."

*The following will receive the **Distinguished Citizen Award** that recognizes alumni who have exercised leadership in civic, social, religious and professional activities. It is given because the Alumni Association, the Board of Trustees, and the faculty of Macalester believe that a college education should be the training and inspiration for unselfish and effective service to the community, the nation, and the world. Recipients demonstrate a practical acceptance of these obligations in their lives and work.*

David Lanegran '63, St. Paul, Minn. With four sisters among the family members enrolled at Macalester before David Lanegran '63 even arrived, the Lanegran family had already established deep ties to the college. He went on to carve out his own unique legacy when he returned in 1969 to begin a teaching career that spans 45 years so far. His work's influence stretches from Macalester to the international geographic education community. As Macalester's John S. Holl Chair of Geography and an expert on urban development and planning, Lanegran teaches human and urban geography courses. In recognition of his teaching, he has won Macalester's Jefferson Award and the Burlington-Northern Award for Teaching Excellence. In 1977, *Educational Change* magazine named him one of the nation's 10 outstanding geography teachers. His publications include a series of books and reports that helped revitalize several Twin Cities neighborhoods and commercial streets including Grand Avenue, Summit Hill, St. Anthony Park, and the Lakes District. Lanegran's service record is just as extensive. He has served on campus and alumni committees, receiving Macalester's Alumni Service Award in 2008. Locally, his interest in Twin Cities history and historic preservation drew him to civic work such as leading the effort to restore St. Paul's Landmark Center. He has championed geographic education from the elementary grades through college, including leadership that shaped the Advanced Placement Human Geography test. A National Council for Geographic Education past president and Association of American Geographers past national councilor, Lanegran was honored with each organization's highest award in 2008 and 2010, respectively. At Macalester, the thriving geography department may be what speaks best to his legacy. "Dave Lanegran has played a vital role in helping to build and sustain one of the greatest liberal arts college geography departments in the country," says current department chair Bill Moseley. "His devotion to literally thousands of students who have gone on to careers in public service, the private sector, and academia is, in a word, astounding."

Wayne Potratz '64, Minneapolis, Minn., Practicing art could be perceived as solitary work, but for Wayne Potratz, it's the opposite: his art has connected him to a global community of teachers, students, and scholars. Thanks to many international artist's residencies, Potratz has developed a broad, unique, and global

perspective on his craft: “A specialist in ancient metal casting techniques from around the world, he has advanced the cause of internationalism through the making, teaching, and international exhibit of sculpture,” writes one of his nominators, Macalester art Professor Ruthann Godollei. A serious artist even as an undergraduate, Potratz majored in art education. Encouraged by Mac mentors and art Professors Tony Caponi and Jerry Rudquist, he earned a master’s degree in sculpture from the University of California–Berkeley. In nearly five decades that followed, Potratz balanced teaching and practicing art at equally exceptional levels. He taught more than 2,200 undergraduate and graduate students in more than 150 University of Minnesota courses over a 45-year teaching career. In 2008, the university named Potratz a College of Liberal Arts Scholar, the first artist to ever receive the honor. Using the Lakota sign for “turtle” as his artistic signature since graduate school and drawing inspiration from many trips to Minnesota’s Boundary Waters, Potratz works primarily with cast bronze, iron, and aluminum. He is the founder of the International Conference on Contemporary Cast Iron Art. He has received international recognition through fellowships and awards, including the International Sculpture Center’s 2013 Outstanding Educator Award, and has been part of 30 one- or two-person exhibitions and 340 group exhibitions. Writes another nominator on his impact: “Wayne has contributed to the education not only of generations of students at the University of Minnesota but also of a worldwide community of scholars, with whom he speaks in the international language of art.”

Beth Bergman ’73, St. Paul, Minn. Raised a Presbyterian, Beth Bergman found at Macalester a shared commitment to community. A studio art major, she credits her professors with teaching her *how to see*. Now she combines those interests as the owner of Wet Paint Artists’ Materials and Framing nearby on Grand Avenue. After a short stint balancing art and the corporate world, Bergman began working for Hugh Huelster ’74 at Wet Paint. In 1984, she bought the store and began developing it into the landmark it is today. Wet Paint serves professional artists, art students, and enthusiasts who crave the satisfaction of creating. Her extensive inventory of 35,000 different art materials astonishes experienced retailers, as well as the budding entrepreneurs who seek her advice. A 2013 *Star Tribune* article wrote of Bergman, “Her longtime support of Twin Cities artists, work with local independent business groups and leadership in the industry’s national trade group have made Wet Paint one of the most widely known and well-respected independent art supply retailers in the country.” That trade group, International Art Materials Association, last year named her to their Hall of Fame. Bergman has served on the boards of the Minnesota Museum of American Art and the Grand Avenue Business Association, and is a longtime supporter of the Minnesota Center for Book Arts and the Highpoint Center for Printmaking in Minneapolis. She was a founding member of both WARM Gallery, (Women’s Art Registry of Minnesota) and Metro Independent Business Alliance in the Twin Cities. An active alumna, Bergman has chaired her Reunion committee, organized Reunion art shows, and hosted dinners for first-year students. She has been a valuable consultant and a generous donor to the renovation and expansion of Macalester’s new studio art building.

Elizabeth Richards ’83, St. Paul, Minn., It was during her last year at Macalester that Elizabeth Richards found her life’s work. That year the speech and women’s studies major did an internship with the St. Paul nonprofit Women’s Advocates helping to get women protective court orders. A few years later she was in law school at the University of Minnesota working in a new public interest law clinic that took on domestic abuse cases. “We picked up 22 cases in the first two weeks of the program,” Richards remembers. Thus she entered the important new field of domestic violence prevention work, a field that in the early ’80s had only existed for a few years in Minnesota. Richards went on to work for 10 years as training program manager for the Battered Women’s Legal Advocacy Project, as a battered women’s advocate with the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office, and as a civil rights complaint investigator for the City of Minneapolis and the State of Minnesota. Two years ago, after working for the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women for several years as a lawyer and program director, she became the group’s executive director. In that role she helps bring together 80 member programs throughout Minnesota that advance women’s safety and security. Says her

college roommate and nominator Tina Clarke '82, "Liz has worked tirelessly to help prevent and heal violence in every corner of Minnesota. She builds bridges, solves problems, empowers women, facilitates understanding, and proactively prevents violence, abuse, and prejudice." Last year was a discouraging one for domestic violence workers in Minnesota, with a larger than usual number of Twin Cities women killed by their husbands and boyfriends. "It's easy to ask, why is this problem not getting any better?" says Richards. "Are we making any progress at all? But I have a 30-year perspective and I can see that things have improved for women in Minnesota. Three decades ago they had no options, few shelters, no programs." That said, she is by no means complacent. The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women is working on conflict resolution programming designed to prevent domestic violence, and educational programming around teen violence and is continuing its public awareness and public policy work. "Safety is a fundamental human right," says Richards. "If we cannot provide safety in our citizens' homes, how can we move onto other things?"

View past Macalester alumni award winners here: [macalester.edu/alumni/alumniawards/](http://www.macalester.edu/alumni/alumniawards/)
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Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,011 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu)
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